

N. 9.
G O D *the Hope, and the Sa-
viour of his People.*

Apply'd to the C A S E of
Protestant-Dissenters:

I N A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at a
S O L E M N F A S T,

June 2. 1714.

On Occasion of the B I L L, *for pre-
venting the Growth of Schism, &c.*

By J O S I A S M A U L T B Y,
Minister of the Gospel at Sudbury in Suffolk.

L O N D O N :

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JER. 14. former Part of *Ver. 18.*

O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in Time of Trouble!

AS it is a Duty to apply to God in all Cases of Necessity, and Distress; so hath it been usual with the People of God to make their Applications to him under such Notions, and Characters, as suit at least the general State of their Case; by which they discover at once a due Sense of the Errand they come upon, and a becoming Confidence in that God, whom they apply to. I doubt not but both of 'em will appear necessary, and useful upon the present Occasion. They were very severe Judgments, that the Church here had her Eye upon; *viz.* a most grievous Famine, and the desolating Sword: but there are some Calamities, more grievous than Those; *viz.* a Famine of the Word, and the being expos'd to such Desolations, as will make the very *Ways of Zion* to mourn. As then the Church makes her earnest Addresses to the God of Heaven, when None could help Her; so is it high Time for us to do the same Thing, when None will bear us. I shall not therefore make any Apology for such a Day as *This*. Those that are not abandon'd to all Sense of Religion must needs know, 'tis most peculiarly, both our Duty and Privilege, to call upon him in the Day of Trouble; and 'tis with this Advantage we do it; Tho' no Man regard us, yet we know

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that He can; and, we know not, but that He may both hear, and answer us; for He is the *Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of Trouble.* In which Words we may observe,

1st, The *State* they were in: 'Twas with them a Time of Distress and Trouble; a Day, wherein they found Trouble and Sorrow; wherein they felt much, and, perhaps fear'd more; wherein their outward Circumstances were straitn'd, and their very Spirits sunk and cast down; wherein God had a Controversie with them, and Man sought their Destruction; wherein they fear'd an utter Rejection, and total Desertion from that God, who had hitherto appear'd for 'em, and espous'd their Cause: Yea, such Times they were, wherein they looked for Peace, and there was no Good, and for the Time of Healing, and, behold Trouble! Whatever we our selves suffer as Protestant Dissenters; yet could we heartily rejoice, were there not the Prospect of such Times with respect to the whole Nation in General: But however, Men will at Length convince us, that we have no reason to be secure with respect to our selves.

2^{dly}, The *Course*, they took: And that was earnest Application to God. O the *Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in Time of Trouble.* This Clause is most plainly cast into such a Form of Speaking, as notes both that they *did* apply to Him, and *how* they did so.

1st, That they *did* apply to him: O the *Hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof, in Time of Trouble!* The Words are address'd most directly to God Himself; He it is that is spoken to; They carry'd their Cause to Him, and made their Complaint before Him. As He was the only One they could apply to, so would they apply to no other: But

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to *Him* would they make their Application: and He should *hear* from 'em. They would not neglect either their Duty, or their Remedy in this Case. As God had bro't them under the Obligation, so would they comply with it; and as He had directed them to the Way, so would they as freely take it: This, we know, is *Our Duty*, and Relief in the Case before us: Let Men threaten, and oppress us ever so much; yet *will we give our selves unto Prayer*, and to God *will we commit our Cause*.

2dly, *How* they apply'd to Him: The Words are very full and emphatical, yea very proper, and suitable to show, how we ought to make our Applications to Him, and they include two Things; His *Relation* to Them, and *what* they had in Him.

1st, His *Relation* to Them: Whatever he was, That was He to Israel. O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in Time of Trouble! Israel had a Claim to Him, as *Their God*: as a God, who had espous'd their Cause, defended their Persons, and was, at least, *professedly*, or *externally* related to 'em: yea, as a God *really* so to all such as were sincere, and upright amongst 'em: a God nearer to them, than to the Rest of the World, whose Name was more especially call'd upon 'em; yea, whose Interest and Glory they might humbly plead in their own Defence. And, let Persons load us with ever so many Reproaches, let their Speeches be ever so hard, their Treatment ever so severe; yet such a one, we trust, have we also to apply to; and tho' we would be far from engrossing Him to our selves, yet will not we be afraid of standing to it; That His Name, Interest, and Cause is amongst us.

2dly,

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2dly, *What they had in Him*: As this God was *their* God, so must He be *That* to them, that no Creature in Heaven, or on Earth could be; and this appears in the Character they give Him: O *the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in Time of Trouble*! Here's then something with respect to their *State*, and something with respect to their *Frame*, which they had, and found in their God.

1st, With respect to their *State*: He was their *Saviour*, or Deliverer. The Word supposes Evil or Danger: And notes a Deliverance from, or out of it. God was not only their Support under, but their Deliverer from those Distresses, and Calamities they were expos'd to, or afraid of: He was *able* to deliver; He was *ready* to deliver; yea, He was *One*, who had *shown* Himself, and that in many signal, and remarkable Instances, to *be* the Deliverer or Saviour of his People, even when they had been in the greatest Danger, and were ready to become a Prey to their Enemies. As for Us, We *know* Him, *whom we have believed*. We know him so far, as to be able to say, He *can* deliver us from the Evils we fear; the Evils, that are design'd, and preparing for us; In such Cases He *hath* deliver'd us; and, if our Sins prevent not, we know He *will* do it. This, however, we are assur'd of, that He *is* the Saviour of Israel.

2dly, With respect to their *Frame*: He is their *Hope*, as well as their Saviour: He that is *their* God, is the God of Salvation; and, being so, He may well be their Hope. God is, sometimes, call'd by the very *Affections* of His People: He's call'd the *Fear of Isaac*, the Spouse's *Love*, the *Desire* of all Nations, the Psalmist's *Joy*, and here the Church's *Hope*; noting that he is the *Object* of all These to his People; whom they Fear,

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Love, Desire, Rejoice, and Hope in; All which they most certainly do. He is their *Hope* at all Times, especially, in a Time of Trouble; since, at that Time, He is their Saviour. 'Tis in this God, that *We* would place our Hope; and, how little soever we hope from Men, whatever Fears, or Apprehensions we may be under with respect to them, yet will we trust in the Mercy, Power, and Faithfulness of God for ever.

From the Words I shall observe, and speak to this following Point of Doctrine: *That God is the Saviour, and Hope of his People in Time of Trouble.* In speaking to which, I should consider, 1st, This *Time of Trouble*, as it relates to our own Case; 2^{dly}, *Our Application* to him at such a Time; And this, 3^{dly}, as *our God*; Yea, 4^{thly}, his being a *Saviour to us*; And, 5^{thly}, the Ground of *Hope, and Encouragement* we have in this Case; And then, *lastly*, some proper, but short *Improvement* of the Whole.

I. Let us consider this *Time of Trouble* the Church speaks of, and that, as applicable to *our own Case*. I shall here take the Liberty to mention some Things, which we account no small *Trouble* to us; and that for this purpose only; to show, that we have *Need* to be earnest in Prayer, and Supplication. And,

1st, 'Tis no small trouble to us, to find the *Mouths* of Persons so generally open against us. What the *Jews* said of the Profession of Christianity at first, was, certainly, never more true of the Dissenting Cause, and Interest, than it is at this very Day. For, as concerning this *Sett*, say Acts 28. they, we know, that every where it is spoken against. 22. It is surprizing to think, that Those, who scarce
know

know any thing else, have been taught to load us with Reproaches, and Calumnies. Our Persons are branded as Rebels and Phanaticks; our Schools, as Seminaries of Sedition and Faction; our Meetings, as Nurseries of Error and Schism; Persons must be made to believe, that we are the very Pests of Mankind, and deserve not so much as *Protection* from the Government. This is the old Course, which *Pagans* and *Jews* took against Christianity it self; yea, against the Author, as well as Professors of it. Christ was *then* declar'd to be an Enemy to *Cesar*, and a Destroyer of the Temple, *i. e.* one, who would pull down their Church: The Apostle *Paul* was a pestilent Fellow, and a Mover of Sedition: The Primitive Christians went frequently under the same Censure, because they could not comply with the Impositions of others, or endeavour'd to promote their own Principles: Such were the Reproaches *then*, and such the Calumnies *now*, which Christianity is loaded with; concerning which we shall at present make only the same Answer, which the Apostle made to *That* of the *Jews*: But *this I confess unto thee; that, after the way, which They call Heresy, so worship I the God of my Fathers.* But tho' we would be stedfast, and those, who are hearty in what they profess, must needs be steady to their Principles: Yet can it be no Pleasure to us, to have such Misrepresentations made of us, and such Reproaches cast upon us, as the Authors themselves are ashamed to own.

Acts 24.
14.

2dly, 'Tis no small Trouble to perceive the Countenance of the Government seeming to withdraw from us. We are far from being conscious of deserving any such Treatment. We profess Submission to Authority in general; have subscrib'd, and that very heartily, to the present Government;

vertiment; do cheerfully contribute towards the Support of it; have had Assurances from it with respect to our Liberties and Privileges; The whole Legislature hath joyn'd in the Act of Toleration; The Throne hath declar'd it Inviolable; The very Church it self hath, *in a Time of Trouble*, declar'd its favourable Inclinations towards us; and, but the very Last Parliament call'd us Dissenting *Brethren*, and *Fellow-Christians*, as well as *Fellow-Subjects*: But, from what Quarter soever it comes, all these *kind Words*, and *friendly Compellations* are *now over*: and have for *some time* been turning a quite different way. We are not tho't fit, or worthy to serve in any Place of Trust; nay, we must not be trusted with the Education of our Children, nor suffer'd to train 'em up, amongst our selves, for Usefulness in the World, or Church of God. These Things we can't but declare, are no small Trouble to us. We must needs, as well as other Persons, value the Favour of the Government; and do assure You, we Would purchase it at any rate, but with the Loss of our Consciences, and Principles: and, therefore, we can't forbear expressing our Concern, that we should be expos'd to those Frowns, that we even *studiously* avoid.

3dly, It is no small Trouble to Hear, that our *Profession* it self is struck at, and threaten'd. Those that are truly Conscientious, must needs be concern'd for the *Principles*, they espouse, and the *Worship*, they observe: *This* they will value, keep, and promote according to the utmost of their Power; and, let it be reckon'd a Fault, or no, they can't help it; they must needs, they can't but *Speak the Things which they themselves have* Acts 4. *bad so much Knowledge, and Experience of.* They are 20. very Thankful for any Opportunities, or Advantages

vantages hereto ; and, as they would be far from abusing 'em to Sedition, which is more a Slander than a Charge upon 'em ; so, whenever God in his Providence opens the Door, they think themselves not *true* to their Interest, and Cause, If they *do* not, what lies in their Power, towards the promoting of it ; and that both as to Place, and Time ; that it may spread *wider*, and last *longer*, than either the Place, or Time, wherein they Live, can reach : That *This* then, should be discourag'd, stop'd, and prevented ; that we should be stinted, limited, and confin'd in our Usefulness, as to Religion, must be no small Trouble to Those, who have the Interests of Pure, Primitive, Scriptural, and Apostolical Christianity at Heart : 'Tis this we profess, this we observe, this alone we would propagate ; and, the more concern'd we are about it, the greater shall we account the *Trouble* not to be suffer'd to do it.

4^{thly}, The Case of our CHILDREN is no small Trouble to Us : I have observ'd, the Severities (if I may so call 'em) of the present Times particularly reach and affect *them* : Their *Baptisms* are by many Persons declar'd Null, and Void ; when yet they are Baptiz'd in that very Way, in which all Christians are, and must be so : Their *Burials* are in several Places deny'd and refus'd 'em ; tho' Nothing is to be objected against 'em, but *that* their Baptism : Their *Education* must be taken away ; tho' *They* may be capable of being, in time, as Useful, as the Children of any other sort of Persons whatsoever : And, can any Religious, Tender Parent reflect upon *This* without Concern ? Doth he not value the Welfare of his Children next to his own Salvation ? Is he not intrusted with the Care of his *own* Children ? Is he not concern'd to have 'em educated *the same Way* that

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he professes, and believes *himself*? Can He bear the Thoughts of seeing 'em take a Way, which he must needs suppose to be *Wrong*, or he can't think Himself *Right*? Can it be imagin'd? that *We*, who take the Education of them chearfully upon ourselves, must not Account it a very great Hardship, that even *This* should be deny'd us! and our Principles accounted *such*, that our very Children themselves must be guarded against em! These Things, my Friends, let *Others* think, what they please, are no small Trouble to *Us*, and I am sure, must be so, to *all* those, that deserve but the Name of *Protestant Dissenters*. If therefore we have any Fears, or Apprehensions of such Things, as *These*, coming upon us, we may well look upon it a *Time of Trouble* with us, and accordingly in the

II. Make our *Application* to God. As what I have related concerning the *State* of our Case is plain Matter of Fact, what every Body must needs observe, and know; so, the great Design I have in doing it, is to direct, and engage you to your Duty; which is Applying to God: *O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in Time of Trouble.* And

1st, *Nature* it self will teach us to cry unto him in a Time of Distress and Trouble. *Lord, Isa. 26. saith the Prophet, in Trouble have they visited thee; 16. they have Pour'd out a Prayer, when thy Chastening was upon Them.* Those, that have only the Light and Principles of Nature, are directed, and engaged hereto. *Jonah's Mariners, tho' Heathens, Chap. yet in a Storm, were for crying, every Man, to his 5, 6. God; and awak'd the sleepy Prophet to call upon his God: Yea, God declares it of those, who would regard him at no other Time, that in their Affliction, they would seek him early.* So far, as Persons

Hof. 5.
15.

either find, or apprehend themselves in Trouble; so far their very Sense is touch'd, and consequently their Concern must be rais'd: Not, but that some Persons may account *that* a Trouble, which really is not, and so be concern'd without any Reason; and Others may account *that* no Trouble, which really is, and so be Careless and Unconcern'd in the Case; yet, when any Persons perceive their Circumstances to be difficult, and dangerous; they have *then* the Advantage of Sense it self to prompt and urge 'em to such Applications to God for Relief: For he is *known* to be the Refuge of the Distressed, and the Relief of those that are in Trouble: The common Cry of even profane Persons, *Lord! have Mercy upon us! God help us!* when any Thing disturbs, or threatens 'em; is a plain Proof of the secret Voice of Nature in this Case. But,

2dly, Scripture most expressly directs to this Method. It is the positive Command of the great God in his Word, *Call upon me in the Day of Trouble*: This is Part of that Worship, and Homage he calls for at our Hands; that we acknowledge our Dependance upon Him, our Need of His Help, our Unworthiness of it, and yet His Ability, and Readiness to afford it: We are warrant-ed, allow'd, enjoyn'd, and encourag'd to make our Applications to Him, to seek his Face, and to implore his gracious Regard: His Greatness, Holiness, and Justice need not terrify us; nor our Meanness, Impurity, and Guilt discourage us: His Authority, Sovereignty, and Word bind us hereto; and, *not to do it* is a Provocation to Him, to proceed in that Severity, He threatens us with: He would have us sensible of our Case, Humbl'd for our Sins, Desirous of his Mercy, and Importunate with Him for Help: We may as

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well excuse our selves from all Parts of Religious Worship as *This*: And to neglect Him in such a Case were a Renouncing both our Subjection to Him, and Dependance upon Him: He, that hath given us such plain Directions, such express Commands, and such great Encouragements, Expects, that we should observe, and improve 'em; and so apply to Him in a Time of Distress and Trouble.

3dly, The People of God have a Principle, that will lead 'em to it, and put 'em upon it. They have his Law written in their Hearts in this, as well as in other Respects; They are bro't to a Hearty Compliance with his Will in this, as well as in other Cases: Nay, they have a Spirit within 'em, that is, more especially, a Spirit of Prayer, of Grace, and Supplication; a Spirit of Adoption, that will engage, and enable them to cry, *Abba! Father!* to go to him, as Children to a Father, under all their Necessities, and Distresses; They have taken Him for their God; which implies, that He is the Author of all their Mercies, as well as the Object of all their Worship; their Hope and Saviour as well as their Lord and Sovereign: To Him therefore must they apply as *such*; and both seek, and expect their All from Him: They are taken off from all Creature-Refuges, Confidences, Supports, and Comforts; and in Him alone do they place their Safety, and Security: *Ashur shall not save us*, Hof. 14. saith the Church, *we will not ride upon Horses*, 3. *neither will we say any more to the Work of our Hands, Ye are our Gods; For in Thee the Fatherless, the Helpless, findeth Mercy*: Means indeed they'll use; they'll not be wanting in all lawful Endeavours: they think they may very fairly vindicate their own Cause with respect to Men; but it is to God, Job 5. 8. that they principally seek, and to Him that they commit their Cause.

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4thly, This is the Only effectual Method, that they can take. A Time of Trouble is a Time of Need; They need Help, and Relief; but, what Jer. 3. 23. faith the Prophet? *Truly in vain is Salvation hoped for from the Hills, and from the Multitude of Mountains; truly, in the Lord our God is the Salvation of Israel*; Creatures, at best, are Useless in themselves, and, at some particular Times, God will more especially make 'em appear so: The most likely and promising Helps may deceive our Expectations; but at some Times may we be Psal. 142. bro't to the Psalmist's Case: *I looked on my Right Hand, and beheld; but there was no Man, that would know me, Refuge failed me, no Man cared for my Soul*: What then should be our Course, but that, which immediately follows, in the next Verse? *I cried unto Thee, O Lord! I said, Thou art my Refuge, and my Portion in the Land of the Living*. If therefore we would be deliver'd out of Trouble, and rescu'd from Danger, we must apply to Him, who Alone can, and will help us: As in Him only we can find Relief; so, to Him, tho' to Him alone, must we apply: 'Tis He, who is the Hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in a Time of Trouble: and therefore must we make our Applications to Him at such a Time. And, Blessed be God, we may

III. Apply to Him, *as our God*: as a God concern'd in us, and related to us: Our Applications to Him were Vain indeed, if we could not entertain such Apprehensions, as These, with respect to our Case or Cause: and, therefore, to clear this up, let me mention a few Things.

1st, We are far from making Him this Way the Patron of those Miscarriages, and Failures, that are

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are amongst us. Don't mistake us, Sirs! We are willing, you should observe it, that we would clear, and discharge him from every Thing, that may be Amis in us, or amongst us. We know, He is a Pure, and Holy, a Just, and a Righteous Being: and, as we know our selves to be far from Perfection; as to Doctrin, Worship, Disciplin, or Practice; so, we would not dare to affix his Name to any Error, Abuse, Neglect, or Sins, we are guilty of: We hope, we have such an Awe of that Holy, Fearful, and Tremendous Name, as rather to Condemn *our selves* than to Profane *That*: There's no Body of Men, no professing People upon Earth, that can pretend to a sinless State; and, were this necessary, God must disclaim all gracious, and encouraging Relation to this World of Sinners: He was his People's God under the Old, and under the New Testament; and yet in both Churches were there many Irregularities, and many Miscarriages: Our Apprehensions, and Conceptions are short; and our Practice, with respect to our Selves, Families, and Church of God, do in *many Things* fail of the Rule; These Things we acknowledge, bewail, and endeavour to reform: And, while we do so, tho' *Men* may be very hard, and severe upon us, even to condemn us for 'em; yet, as they have need to look to themselves, in this Case, as well as we; so we trust, that a *merciful God* is the God of his People, notwithstanding their Sins, and Miscarriages: For,

2dly, We do not, we cannot, *as yet*, see any Reason, to look upon *our Cause*, as *Protestant Dissenters*, to be any other, than the Cause of God: We profess again, and again, and this Profession we stand to; That we dissent upon Principle, and not out of Humour; We would appear, and, surely,

surely, it is but a small Request, that our Brethren would look upon us as Men of *Conscience* and *Integrity*, as well as others: and, perhaps, they will convince the World most sensibly, that we shall not dissent in Prospect of Advantage, Ease, or Reputation. 'Tis a Cause, that is, every where reflected, and tramp'd upon, reproach'd, and disdain'd: and, surely, If we could, *in Point of Conscience*, it were as easy a Thing for *Us*, as for *Others*, to relieve our selves in this Case. Is not Peace, Safety, Reputation, and Profit as desirable to Human Nature in *Us*, as in *Others*? What should hinder then, but that, if we could forego our Principles, we might have the same Places of Profit, and Advantage, as others have? For, without Vanity; and, only to oppose the Reproach, that is generally cast upon us; I will be bold to say; That, as there are Ignorant Persons of all Professions; so, we have Persons of as good Capacities, as large Abilities, and of as solid Learning, as any Other Set of Men: and, surely, it must be no small Confirmation hereof, that Persons of a different Perswasion seem to be apprehensive of *Danger* from our Education: But, whatever our Capacities, Abilities, or Learning may be; we dare not prostitute our Consciences for the greatest Ease, Safety, or Advantage in the World: We are satisfy'd in our Profession; that it is, what God hath prescrib'd in his Word; What He will Own; yea, we don't doubt, but will continue to the World's End. We have often appeal'd to *Scripture*; To that Appeal we stand: but we are not afraid to refer our selves to the purest *Antiquity*. I must needs say, Whatever Boasts have been made in this Respect against us, I never yet could find, but that (allowing for those Superstitions, *some* of which

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even our Brethren disown, as well as We) the Profession, and Practice of Christian Worship was much the same for about three hundred Years after Christ, as it is now amongst Us. Our Ministers the same with *Ignatius's* Bishops: Our Ordinances the same with *Justin Martyr's* Worship: Our Prayers the same with *Tertullian's de Pectore*: and even our Christian Assemblies the same with *Cyprian's* Churches. Yea, the nearer we come to Apostolical Times, the more plainly doth all this appear; as the farther we go from them, the more Corruptions may we observe, until Antichrist fixt his Power, and overran the World. Antiquity is so far from being any Prejudice to us, that we are willing, and have frequently shown our selves so, to be try'd even by *That*. But, as the Famous *Chillingworth* once said, *The Bible, the Bible is the Religion of Protestants*. Here it is we have sure Footing, and a plain Rule. And I must sincerely profess, and so make this fair Offer, yea know, I can do it, not in my own Name only, but in the Name of my Brethren, and of all Conscientious Dissenters, whether Ministers, or Christians: that, let any one, not only assert, but fairly prove; That our Ministers, Ordinances, Prayers, and Churches have no Foundation in Scripture, and we shall not need bedesir'd to forsake 'em: But, until then, Let me withal declare; that, 'tis not Assertions without Proof, not Reproaches without Foundation, not evil Treatment without Demerit, that can possibly make us think any otherwise, but that our Cause, even as *Protestant-Dissenters*, is really the Cause of God; and, Notwithstanding all, yea, were Matters come to the utmost Extremity; so far, as God Enables us, we must needs

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Speak,

Acts 5.
38, 39.

Speak, and Attend the Things, which we are so much assur'd, and perswaded of: And Herein, we doubt not, we may appeal to God, as *our* God. Yea, if it would do any Good, might suggest the wise Counsel of *Gamaliel* with respect to the Apostles, who were reproach'd, and persecuted, as well as we: *And now, I say, refrain from these Men, and let them alone; for if this Counsel, or this Work be of Men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest, happily, ye be found to fight against God.*

3dly, As we look upon our Cause, as *Protestant Dissenters*, to be the Cause of God; So is He Really the God of all Those, who are *sincere* amongst us. We are far from supposing; That, because our Cause is His, therefore every Person, who attends our Worship, or enters our Communion, is upon that Account a true Christian, or Child of God: No, a good Conscience, as well as a good Cause, is necessary hereto; 'Tis not the being of This or That Denomination, that will save any One, or secure to Him an Interest in the Love and Favour of God; We have, no Doubt, rotten Members, and profane Persons amongst Us, as well as Others: Tho, by the Way, we must declare, that we give no Countenance, or Allowance to 'em; They are, so far, as they *appear* such, as much condemn'd by us, as by Others; Yea, we dare not encourage any to rest in a bare Name or Profession; Those, that do so, we solemnly warn, and declare to 'em; That 'tis not their Profession, that will avail 'em: For there must be a Real, Vital Principle, evidenc'd by a suitable becoming Conversation; Faith in Christ, and a Religious Deportment in all the Commandments, and Ordinances of the Lord: But, where *These*
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are to be found, We doubt not, that God is *really* the God of such Persons; That they have *really* an Interest in Him; That they may apply to Him, as Their God, and expect the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life: We are under no Pain or Apprehension, at all, at the Anathemas, and Imprecations, that are so liberally dealt out to Us, both from Pulpit and Prefs: We know, and are well assur'd, that no *Persons* under what Character, or Denomination soever, have the Power to exclude us Heaven, to deprive us of our Interest in Christ, to bar up our Access to the Throne of Grace, or to hinder our Applications to God, as our God; We are under no Concern at all about our selves, in this Case, but yet *they* often put us in Mind of those awful Words, 15 Verse of the Epistle of *Jude*, which You may read at your Leisure.

4thly, Tho' we look upon Him to be the God of all Those, that are sincere amongst Us; Yet are we far from thinking he is the God of *Them Only*: Whatever *Others* do, yet would not *We* Confine the Favour of God to our selves: We would not Exclude *Them*, tho' they Exclude *Us*: We are glad to see the Image, and Likeness of God in Any of *Them*, as well as in any of *Us*; and where it is so, tho' we humbly claim an Interest in Him as *Our* God, yet, are we willing to allow; yea rejoice, that we can declare Him to be *Their* God, as well as *Ours*. I have often tho't of Those Words of the Apostle, *With All that in* I Cor. 1. *every Place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our 2. Lord, both Theirs and Ours*: The Apostle seems designedly to use that Expression, because he writ to a divided Church; Wherein One was for *Paul*, Another for *Apollos*, Another for *Cephas*, And Another for *Christ*: He would, however, have

Jude ver.
3.

'em All Centre in This, That Christ was Lord and Saviour of One, as well as the Other : Tho' They were of different Minds and Judgments, Yet would He not have 'em to Judge and Condemn one another, and so to Engross God and Christ, Religion and Happiness to Themselves : No, There's a *Common Salvation*, that belongs to All Saints, that are truly so ; be they of *This*, or *That* Communion. And therefore we profess our Desires of Union, so far as is consistent with our Judgments ; we heartily look upon all sincere Christians, tho' differing from us, as Children of the same Father, and Members of the same Family : And, tho' we are so Unhappy, as not to Worship our God together *Here* ; Yet we hope to meet one another in Heaven *Hereafter*, where all our present unhappy Differences will cease for Ever : But then we may well be allow'd, and, whether we be so, or no, we cannot but think ; That God is the God of Those, that are Sincere, and Hearty amongst our selves ; and that we can apply to Him as *Our* God ; And so may apply to Him,

IV. As Our Saviour in Time of Trouble ; This is the Character, the Church here gives Him with respect to *Israel* ; and *Thus* He most certainly is, to all true *Israelites*, even with respect to the very Cause of His People ; that Cause which they Commit to Him, and spread before Him. And,

1st, He will, most certainly, save his People eternally hereafter. The Word is frequently and in the New Testament generally us'd in this Sense : And tho' the Prophet doth not directly take it so here ; yet, I the rather mention it, because it relates to a *Time of Trouble* ; For, let the Issue, and Event of such Troubles be what they will, as to this World ;

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World ; yet *This* we are assur'd of ; They shall not hinder the Salvation of his People hereafter : He'll be their Saviour *then*, tho' he suffer 'em to perish *now* with respect to the outward Man : They shall enter the Kingdom at last, tho' they must pass thro' great Tribulation, before they come at it : Their Happiness is secure, whatever Changes, and Trials they may meet with here ; yea, their Glory is promoted, and advanc'd by those very Calamities and Troubles, that God thinks fit to exercise 'em with in this World. They shall certainly find him their Saviour *in this Sense*. He may not indeed keep off the Evils they are afraid of ; He designs, for the *Trial* of their Faith, and, it may be, the *Punishment* of their Sins ; for their negligence in respect of Themselves, their Families, and Children, He designs, and resolves to bring 'em under Afflictions, difficult, and distressed Circumstances ; to deprive 'em of those Liberties and Privileges they have enjoy'd, and not improv'd, or rather abus'd : But yet, if they are his People, *Who, or what* Rom. 8. shall separate 'em from the Love of Christ ? Shall Tribulation, or Distress, or Persecution, or Famine, or Nakedness, or Peril, or Sword ? No, For in all these — 37. Things shall they be made *more than Conquerors, thro' Him, that hath loved them*. In this Sense will he most certainly be the Saviour of all that Believe. But,

2dly, He can as easily save 'em out of their most distressed Circumstances with respect to *this* World : As to Power 'tis alike in Him as to both Worlds, for that *He doth according to his Will, in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth*. No Power can be too great, no Device too cunning, no Case too intricate ; in a Word,

Word, no Difficulty insuperable to Him: He can divide Seas, dry up Rivers, remove Mountains, and, which is more, turn Hearts: He can make Enemies to be at Peace, and Friends to be Faithful: He can secure his Peoples outward Safety, and promote their present Prosperity by the most unlikely, yea contrary Means and Methods: He can give 'em Favour in the sight of Men, and incline 'em even to alter their Designs against 'em: He can turn *all the Counsels of crafty Achitophels into Foolishness*, and bring all their Devices to Nought and Confusion; He, that is our God, is a God of *Salvations* in this Respect, for he knows *how to*

1 Pet. 2. 9. deliver the Godly out of Temptation. If He doth it not; 'tis not for want of Power, Wisdom, nor Goodness in Him; 'Tis not because He is not their Saviour in Time of Trouble; for they do *not cry to a God, that cannot*, or is not ready to *save 'em*, as he sees it most fit, and convenient. They can at all Times, and in all Cases, apply to Him, as the God of Salvations, and as Their Saviour in a Time of Trouble. For that,

3dly, When His Time comes, tho' it be the most critical, and dangerous Time with them, yet *will* He then save 'em, even with Respect to their *outward* State. As great an Extremity as His People may be at any Time in; yet, when He arises, commands, and works Deliverance, they shall be deliver'd: He manages Deliverances indeed in His own Way, and Time; but *His Way* shall they be most certainly effected, and bro't about; and, when they have nothing else to do, but to *stand still*, yet even *Then* shall they see the *Salvation of God*; *Then no Weapon form'd against 'em, shall prosper*; and every Tongue, that shall rise against 'em, shall He condemn: *This is the Heritage of the*

Exod. 14.

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Isa. 54.

17.

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Servants of the Lord, and their Righteousness is of me, saith the Lord: Then will He plead their Cause, and bring them forth to the Light, and they shall behold His Righteousness: In this Sense is He their Saviour in a Time of Trouble, let it be ever so great, and attended with ever such difficult, and dangerous Circumstances: Their Apprehensions are mistaken, and their Fears groundless; when they think, that 'tis at any Time too late for Him to Help, or Relieve 'em; never was it yet, nor will it ever be, even in this World, so critical a Time with his People, as that He himself should not be their Saviour. But then,

4thly, Let it go, how it will, with particular Persons, or Societies; yet His own Cause, and Name, his own Church, and Interest will He secure, and save from sinking. A People, yea his own Professing People, may forfeit, and lose his Protection: may, by their Sin and Folly, provoke him to expose 'em to the Insults of those that Hate 'em; to give 'em up into the Hands of those, that seek their All; yea to deprive 'em of those Privileges which they have abus'd; and to remove that very Gospel from 'em, which they have so little improv'd; He may take away his Kingdom, and give it to others that will bring forth the Fruits thereof. But still his Kingdom shall be supported, and his Cause maintain'd in the World: And tho' it may be lost as to Us, which we have Reason to dread, and deprecate, yet shall it be secure, and safe under his Protection; and that notwithstanding all the Designs, and Attempts that are levell'd against it. He will have a Church upon Earth; and to This the Promise holds good, and shall never fail, as long as the Sun and Moon endures: As for me, This is my Cove-

Mic. 7. 9.

Mat. 21.

Isa. 59. 21.

Cove-

Mat. 16.
18.

Covenant, saith the Lord, My Spirit, that is upon Thee, and my Words, which I have put in Thy Mouth, shall not depart out of Thy Mouth, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seeds Seed from henceforth and for ever; He is, and will be a Saviour in this Sense to his Church and Interest, even while the World lasts, and the very Gates of Hell, the Power, and Policy of Men and Devils, shall not be able to prevail against it. And therefore,

V. We may apply to him as our *Hope* in Times of the greatest Difficulty and Trouble: For He is the Hope of *Israel*, as well as the Saviour thereof in Time of Trouble; and so He is in these following Respects.

Ps. 46.
1, 2, 3.

1st. As in Him there is sufficient Reason to Hope at such a Time. His Power, and Promise, His Wisdom, and Faithfulness, His Love, and Relation to His People are never-failing Props to their Faith, and Hope: There is that in Him, and declar'd by Him, that may well keep their Hearts fixed, their Minds easy, and their Spirits cheerful under all the Threatning Aspects of Time, or Frowns of Providence. God is our Refuge, and Strength, a very present Help in Trouble, therefore will not we fear, tho' the Earth be removed, and tho' the Mountains be carry'd into the midst of the Sea; Tho' the Waters thereof rore, and be troubl'd, tho' the Mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Whatever the State of God's People may be with respect to this World; whatever they may fear or meet with from Men; yet may they Hope still, since they have a God to Hope in: Friends may fail, Enemies may threaten, yea Devils may rage; but the Lord reigneth; let the Earth then, let his

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his People *rejoyce*, and Hope notwithstanding: He hath the Hearts, and Hands too of all Persons at his Disposal; and, as they can do nothing without Him, so He can make 'em serve even his Gracious, as well as severe Purposes to His People; and therefore *They* have no Reason to despond or sink. He may well be their Hope, since He is their Saviour.

2dly, He is their Hope, as they *place* their Hope in Him; As they have taken Him for their God, and put their Trust in Him. He is indeed the same Powerful, All-sufficient Being, whether we Hope in Him, or No: He is the Confidence of *All* the Ends of the Earth, tho' so few trust in Him; But *Then* is He *Our* Hope, when we *place* our Hope in Him: When, from a Sense of our own Insufficiency, and his Ability, we avouch Him to be Our God in Christ, and so commit our Selves, our Cause, our All to Him; Who, we, this way, profess, can keep, and manage what we *commit to Him*. The People of God are made sensible, that their Safety here, and Salvation hereafter is in Him alone: And, therefore, with respect to the Choice, and Inclination of their Souls, can they say with the Psalmist, *Whom have we in Heaven but Thee? And there is none upon Earth that we desire besides Thee*; which Words, that they are as applicable to Hope, and Trust, as to Esteem, and Love, will appear from the following Verse, Where he tells us, that *His Flesh, and Heart fail'd*, — 26. *but that God was the Strength of his Heart, and His Portion for ever*: As if he had said, I have no Person, no Creature, whether in Heaven, or on Earth, that I can choose, or desire, as my Refuge and Hope, but Thee alone. Again,

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3dly, He

3dly, He is their Hope, as He *enables* them to *Exercise* their Hope in Him. His People do indeed place their Hope in Him, but They are not able always to Exercise it: No, They may sometimes be under very great Fears, and Despondencies, and, in a manner, without Hope; as was the Case of *Asaph*, *Heman*, and *David*: But, He is the *God of Hope*, as well as the Hope of His People; yea, He is *their Hope*, as he Encourages, Strengthens, and Raises their Hope in Him: *Now the God of Hope fill you with all Joy, and Peace in believing, that ye may abound in Hope thro' the Power of the Holy Ghost.* 'Tis He, that supports their Hopes under the greatest Difficulties, and confirms 'em under the greatest Discouragements: 'Tis He, that enables 'em to encourage themselves in Him, and to rejoyce in the Promise, and Prospect of Deliverance: 'Tis He, that not only brings 'em to a Choice of Him for their Refuge, and Portion; but lets 'em see their Safety, and enjoy Satisfaction in Him: *Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace, whose Mind is stayed on Thee, because He trusteth in Thee*: Whatever Hope they have, He is the Author, as well as Object of it, and in both Respects may He be call'd the Hope of His People. Yea,

Rom. 15.
13.

Isa. 26. 3.

4thly, He is their Hope, as He *Answers* their Hopes and Expectations. Those Hopes, which He directs, and Assists to, He, most certainly will accomplish, and make good: What He hath given 'em ground to expect, they need not fear being depriv'd of: He will not suffer 'em to be disappointed, or ashamed of those Hopes, which they have *regularly* plac'd in Him: As He himself will not fail 'em, so neither shall Their Hopes fail 'em; for He it is, that is the *Hope* of His People:

ple: *The Needy shall not always be forgotten, the Ex- Pſal. 9. 18.*
pectation of the Poor shall not perish for ever: Not, that
 He will answer all the Expectations, that a foolish
 Mind, or a vain Fancy may frame to it self; or
 indeed Answer the Expectation of His People,
just when they please, or desire; but what He
 hath promis'd 'em, *That* may they Hope for; and
That will he bestow upon 'em, or do for 'em *in*
his own Way, and Time; even tho' it were to deli-
 ver 'em from those Evils, they are obnoxious to,
 and threaten'd with from Men: *Let not thine Heart Prov. 23.*
envy Sinners; but *be thou in the Fear of the Lord all 17, 18.*
the Day long; for, *surely there is an End, and thine*
Expectation shall not be cut off. But,

VI. To make some Improvement of what has
 been said; and,

Ist, Is it a Time of Trouble with us, tho' but in
 Fear and Prospect? Let us then *consider* the Pro-
 vidence we are under, what it designs, and In-
 structs us in. It relates chiefly to the Education
 of Children; to deprive us of that very great,
 and invaluable Privilege: The Providence seems,
 in my Apprehension, to look both Backward,
 and Forward. *Backward*, to Humble us for our
 great and notorious Neglect in this Case: What
 is more notorious, and apparent, than this!
 That those very Parents, who profess their Con-
 scientious Dissent, do yet scarce at all Regard,
 whether in the Education, or Disposal of their
 Children in the World, how They prove *in this*
Respect: It hath been All one to Them, whether
 they acknowledge, or forsake *that Interest* which
 their Parents have tho't necessary to Espouse:
 What now doth such a Providence declare but to

this Effect? As you would not take the Opportunity, and improve the Liberty you have had, you shall have it no longer: It shall be taken away; and that, by those very Persons, some of whom, tho' Born of Dissenting Parents, yet whose Education *that Way* might be too much neglected: But then this Providence looks *Forward*, and is a Warning to prepare for whatever may follow; we know not, how far, or to what Degree, God may see fit to try us in our Own Persons. We would gladly forbear hard Tho'ts of what is attempted against us; but 'tis not so long ago, as not easily to be remember'd, that we *have been* forc'd to seek the Bread of our Souls with the utmost Hazard and Danger; and, let others please themselves, or flatter us, how they will; yet, we must be excus'd, if we cannot forbear thinking, that this *may be*, we don't say it *really is*, design'd only *as a Step* farther: As it was with respect to the Christian Cause formerly; and the Protestant Interest of late Years in a Neighbour Nation, under the most Professed, and Implacable, and Dangerous Enemy that it ever had. Let us prepare then for Sufferings: If they do come, 'tis but what we have been warn'd of, and therefore ought to count upon. But,

2dly, Ought *we to apply to God in a Time of Trouble?* Let us then be earnest for a *Spirit of Prayer*, and Supplication. Nothing, My Friends, can be done without it; tho' we would not confine it to *Conceiv'd Prayer*, as Others do to their *Sett Forms*. God calls us to deep Humiliation, and Earnest, Importunate Prayer; but where's that Spirit that must Assist us in all this? Where's that Spirit, that He hath promis'd to *pour Out upon the House of Judah, and the Inhabitants of Jerusalem?*

lem? Even a *Spirit of Grace and Supplication*, by which we may both mourn for our Sins, and implore his Mercy. Let me intreat you, as ever you value your Profession, your Privileges, your Children, and Their Education, think not such a Season, or Duty as *This* needless: Be deeply concern'd; bewail your Miscarriages; your misimprovement of Privileges, your neglect of Education with Respect to Children; Be Earnest, and Importunate with the great God; in whose Hands are the Hearts, and Spirits of all Men; That He would interpose, and stop so fatal a Design as *This*, that is now in Agitation. Tho' you can do nothing else, yet may you Pray, if you have but a Heart to it, and a Spirit for it; and Prayer is the best, many Times, if not always, the most effectual Means: For the *Effectual, Ferwent Prayer of the Righteous Man, availeth much.* Jam. 5. 16.

Again,

3dly, May we, in this Case, apply to God as our God? Be not then *asham'd* of the Cause, which He himself doth Espouse. You have a God on your Side, His Name, Interest, and Glory concern'd about you; and, surely, you have no Reason to be daunted at the Contradiction, Reproaches, and Insults of Ignorant, and foolish Men: This was your Saviour's Case once; and, if it be Yours, you have him for an Example both of *Suffering*, and *Patience*: You are not indeed to *revile again*; this you ought to take the utmost heed of: Yea, you are to *Bless those that Curse you*; and, I hope, by your peaceable Behaviour, you will give a plain Proof, that they can find no Occasion against you, except in Matters, relating to God, and Conscience: But with Respect to *These*, stand your Ground; let not Frowns,

Frowns, or Smiles move you to prevaricate, or go off from your Profession: 'Tis a Cause well worth the Owning, yea, worth the Suffering for, even tho' it were the bitterest Reproaches, or the severest Treatment; since it is a Cause, that God Himself, I doubt not, will maintain, as he hath done, in the very midst of severe Persecutions: God and Conscience will at last appear to be your best Friends; and therefore, tho' you have no need to Judge others, yet neither have you any need to be asham'd of your selves, *as Dissenting Protestants*. But then,

4^{thly}, Is God the Saviour of His People in a Time of Trouble? O then, clear up, and renew your *Cov'nant Interest* in Him, as your *Saviour*: This is necessary to a well grounded Confidence, both before Him, and towards Men: You can never apply to Him as your God, tho' He may be really so, if you don't know in some Measure that He is your God: Nor will you be able, with Cheerfulness to Own his Cause, unless you have some Ground to conclude, that He is on your Side; that He is your Saviour, and will save you, if not here, yet however Eternally hereafter. Be then solicitous to know the true State of your Case; be Impartial, and Faithful with your own Hearts: Deceive not, Impose not upon your Selves; make sure Work of it, and lay a good Foundation; secure your Interest in Christ, see to it, that you be found in Him. Your *Profession* will not secure you; the *best Cause* in the World can do you no good, unless you likewise have a good Conscience: See therefore, that this be sprinkl'd with the Blood of Jesus, that in him you are Pardon'd and Justify'd here, and that you will be accepted, and sav'd hereafter: Bewail

wail the Sins, that have clouded your Evidences, and renew your Covenant that may have been broken: And then in the

5th and last Place, Is God also the Hope of his People? Why then, *improve* this Hope for your Encouragement. Take it which Way you will, and it may be improv'd to very great Support under the sharpest Trials. Is there Ground of Hope? What then need you to fear? Have you taken him for your Hope? How securely may you trust in Him? Doth He enable you to Hope? How can you then be cast down? Hath he ever answer'd your Hopes? And can't you hope in him still? O! How chearful! I was going to say, how unconcerned may you be! Whatever is done, whatever is bro't about upon Earth, when God is the Hope of *his People*, and *your Hope*; yea, with what Encouragement may you plead *This* in all your Addressesto him! for your Selves, for your Children, for the Nation, and for the Church of God. So far as God hath given you Ground, hath bro't, hath enabl'd, hath encourag'd you to Hope: How strongly may Faith hereupon plead! *Lord! Thou hast said, thou wilt do so, or so, for thy People; Be it unto thy Servants according to thy Word: Remember the Word to thy Servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to Hope: Preserve me, O God! For in Thee do I put my Trust: In Thee, O Lord! Do I put my Trust, Let me never be ashamed; Deliver me in thy Righteousness.* Thus may we improve this Character, the Church here gives to God, O Thou the Hope of Israel! *The Saviour thereof in Time of Trouble.*

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